

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MR. LARRY JUANARENA

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the work and accomplishments of a true American hero and patriot, Larry Juanarena, a constituent of mine from Chico, California. For over five decades, Mr. Juanarena, has helped and inspired the residents of Chico.

Mr. Juanarena's work has touched citizens in many sectors of the community. From the Salvation Army, 4-H, to law enforcement and emergency response, Mr. Juanarena is known for providing assistance to those in need. Mr. Juanarena has touched many lives in his community, and has been highly decorated for his dedication and service to his fellow citizens.

Mr. Juanarena is probably best known for his efforts in supporting our Nation's troops and veterans from all wars and conflicts. Having served in the United States Air Force as a crew chief on a B-36 bomber, Mr. Juanarena continues his fight for freedom by supporting the families of our deployed soldiers and warriors through his work with the National Guard Family Assistance Program. Mr. Juanarena's Annual Red, White and Blue dinner has improved the lives of our guard families by providing financial assistance to those in need as they struggle to meet household obligations while their loved ones fight for our great Nation.

Mr. Juanarena continues to be an extraordinary individual who makes significant and lasting contributions to our community through his civic minded leadership and can-do spirit.

Mr. Juanarena exemplifies the notion of responsible citizenship and through his charitable work has touched the lives of many in our community. Mr. Juanarena's selfless actions have inspired a community and demonstrated that one person can make a difference when acting from the heart.

I am privileged to have a friend in Larry Juanarena, and I am extremely grateful for his service to our troops, veterans, and our community-at-large. It is a great privilege to celebrate and honor the accomplishments of a true American hero and patriot.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID JOHN DONAFEE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of David Donafee for a life that was dedicated to his family, friends, and public service.

David was a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service for 14 years. He was tragically killed while delivering mail on his route in Parma Heights, Ohio. David was a devoted father who actively supported his children's interest in hockey, as well as a devoted husband and son. David is survived by his wife, Sandi; his two children, Derek and Liam; and his mother, Rose.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembering David Donafee. May his life be an example of how we should lead our own.

GUEST BOOK FOR JOHN DAVID DONAFEE: [HTTP://WWW.LEGACY.COM/CLEVELAND/GB/GUESTBOOKVIEW.ASPX?PERSONID=103615431](http://www.legacy.com/CLEVELAND/GB/GUESTBOOKVIEW.ASPX?PERSONID=103615431)

Shellie Rockwell (Broadview Hts., OH)

Sandi, Liam and Derek,

You are in our thoughts and prayers. Just remember that Dave's presence will forever be with everyone that knew him. His love for all three of you, his contagious smile and his easy-going style will be remembered for years to come.

The Rockwell Family

RECOGNIZING APRIL BRANSCOME AS OKALOOSA COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today in recognition of April Branscome, Okaloosa County's Teacher of the Year.

For over two decades, April Branscome has worked at Niceville High School. Employed initially as a secretary, Ms. Branscome now serves as an information technology instructor and is a savant on educational technology. Her teaching skills range from the conventional to the more cutting-edge. She is excellent in the classroom, possessing an incredible ability to inspire her pupils. Not content to rest upon her laurels, Ms. Branscome has expanded upon her talents and has taken her advanced comprehension of technology to the next level of teaching.

Constructed for Okaloosa's CHOICE IT institute, Ms. Branscome fashioned her own web design curriculum, which resulted in a 100 percent passage rate for students seeking their Internet Webmaster certificate. She is currently being courted by schools throughout the State to train their IT teachers.

Ms. Branscome's ascension to Teacher of the Year did not happen quickly. Shortly after her high school graduation, Ms. Branscome took on a secretarial position at Niceville High School. While working, she became enthralled with education, yet lacked the credentials to teach. For 12 years, taking one or two night and weekend classes at a time, Ms. Branscome finally attained a teaching degree.

The title of Teacher of the Year is an immense honor and is evidence of the greatness Ms. Branscome has attained. Beyond the title lies Ms. Branscome's dedication and devotion to not only her students, but to the entire community. Her teaching skills and affable personality have influenced many and have pushed countless students to a higher level of academic achievement. Ms. Branscome's outstanding accomplishments have distinguished her as one of the great teachers in northwest Florida, and the Okaloosa County School District is honored to have her as one of their own. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize April Branscome on this outstanding achievement and her exemplary service in Okaloosa County.

IN HONOR OF THE BRAVE MINNESOTA MEN AND WOMEN IN BLUE

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, Minnesota has been blessed with 23,000 brave men and women who selflessly police our streets, protect our neighborhoods, and keep our families safe.

These men and women are represented by a truly phenomenal organization. The Minnesota Fraternal Order of Police defends and supports every hero who wears a badge and carries that great and high honor of being called an officer of the law.

No people, no nation, can enjoy the blessings of liberty without the rule of law. Thanks to their tireless dedication and noble sacrifices, the people of our State can live free of fear and safe from harm as they raise their families, live their lives and build their communities.

Our debt to these brave souls can never be paid. But we can start by erecting a wall to honor the inspiring heroes of our State who gave their very lives in their daily battle against every hazard and evil that threatens the peace.

We must never take for granted the sacrifice each and every officer makes, day in and day out, for the people of Minnesota. They have my deepest gratitude and unwavering support.

CONGRATULATING KAREN SKORDINSKI, A RECIPIENT OF THE STATE OF TEXAS EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AWARD

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Karen Skordinski of Flower Mound, Texas for her many contributions to the State of Texas and the north Texas region. Ms. Skordinski was recently named one of four recipients of the Emergency Management Award for the State of Texas.

The Excellence in Emergency Management Award is presented annually to State and local emergency management projects, activities and campaigns that advance the goals of saving lives and protecting property by mitigating, preparing for, responding to, or recovering from disasters and emergencies in Texas. Recipients of this award must exemplify model emergency management by developing and implementing an exceptional emergency management project, activity or campaign in Texas during the past year.

Ms. Skordinski is acknowledged for her work developing Flower Mound's Emergency Management Plan and for the Community Emergency Response Team, CERT, Program.

She is the Emergency Management Specialist for Flower Mound and has worked in emergency management for 5 years. Before then, she worked in the town's geographical information systems department, which designs the town's maps.

Prior to her work in north Texas, Ms. Skordinski worked with geographical information systems at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and was a geographical information systems contractor for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA.

Ms. Skordinski started Flower Mound's CERT program after learning about it from a Flower Mound firefighter. She felt that it was important to start this program in order to get the citizens of Flower Mound more involved in the Fire Department. In the years since Ms. Skordinski began the CERT program, numerous residents have received the training required to respond to emergency situations, making the community safer for all.

Madam Speaker, it is an honor today to rise in recognition of Ms. Skordinski's dedication to the safety and well-being of her fellow Flower Mound citizens. She is truly deserving of such an enormous honor. Flower Mound is now a safer city, and all those who recognize the contributions of Ms. Skordinski are truly grateful. She is an inspiration to all Americans devoted to community service.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 845 to bring awareness and recognize the 60th anniversary of our beautiful and unique Everglades National Park.

The Everglades are truly a national treasure, an irreplaceable part of our national landscape with its vast wetland wilderness unlike any other in the world. The Everglades National Park is part of the south Florida ecosystem that includes over 3 million acres with subtropical wetland landscapes that stretch 220 miles from Orlando to Florida Bay. As President Truman noted when he dedicated the park in 1947, "To its natural abundance we owe the spectacular plant and animal life that distinguishes this place from all others in our country."

The Everglades National Parks constitutes the largest subtropical wilderness in the Nation featuring slow-moving waters and provides critical habitat to ecosystems for countless animals including rare and endangered species such as the American crocodile, Florida panther, Western Indian manatee and more than 350 species of birds, including the Great Egret, Wood Stork, Swallow-tailed Kite, Cape Sable seaside sparrow, and Roseate Spoonbill.

For good reason, it has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site, and a Wetland of International Importance—in recognition of its significance to all people of the world.

Many people have had a great impact on the establishment and history of the Ever-

glades, including former Florida Governor Spessard Holland, who incidentally is a Bartow native. His work in the 1940s to secure thousands of acres needed for the creation of the park along with his 25 year Senate career in which he championed and ensured resources were made available for projects was instrumental. He was one of the first great champions of the Everglades and I am so grateful for his work, without which, we might not be here celebrating the Park's 50th anniversary.

Unfortunately, the Everglades have been negatively impacted by encroachment and disruption that has harmed wildlife and destroyed wetlands. I am pleased that Congress and the State of Florida have been working together through to restore and rehabilitate this treasure through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, CERP. I join my colleagues in continued support and dedication to these efforts in the years to come to ensure and preserve the Everglades' majesty and beauty for future generations to enjoy.

PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the passage of the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act (H.R. 1424)—a bill that will fill the long-standing gaps in mental health care in this Nation and that will end the unfortunate disparate treatment that patients seeking mental health care currently receive.

Mr. Speaker, as a physician who practiced for more than two decades prior to coming to Congress, I have seen what happens to people who are afflicted with mental illnesses like bi-polar disorder, depression, and schizophrenia who do not receive appropriate, consistent care.

Studies confirm that mental health is integral to the holistic health and wellness of all people. Additionally, under-addressed mental health care issues are not just issues that affect the individuals who live with mental disorders; they also affect their friends, families, and communities. And, today, statistics show that 1 in 17 Americans suffer from a serious mental health disorder and that these disorders are the primary cause of disability in the United States among people 15 to 44 years of age—during their most productive life years.

Despite the enormous impact that mental illnesses can and do have on millions of Americans every day, good treatment works. But, of course, the treatment options available to patients comes with a cost and one that up until now has had to be borne largely by the consumer. It is important to recognize though that the cost of mental health problems—when they are un- and under-addressed—becomes staggering.

The good news is not only that over the past eight years, the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) has made "parity" coverage for mental health care available to

Members of Congress and 8.5 million other Federal employees, but that there has been no significant cost increase to this parity requirement in FEHBP. Based on this and further analysis, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that H.R. 1424 would have a miniscule impact on premiums—just two-tenths of 1 percent.

For the sizeable proportion of Americans that suffer from more than one mental health disorder at a given time, this bill will be critical in improving mental health care access, options, and treatments available to patients seeking services.

Certainly, there is no better time than now to ensure that patients seeking treatment for mental illnesses are able to do so in a system that champions mental health parity, where care is accessible and not subject to reimbursement limitations by insurers or group health plans. This bill is exactly what is needed to finally bring equity and fairness into the mental health care system in this Nation and to finally make the health care that individuals can receive comprehensive.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I also want to add that as the chair of the CBC Health Braintrust, I have long been concerned by the racial and ethnic disparities in mental health and in mental health care that detrimentally affect the millions of innocent, hardworking Americans, and have long championed and supported legislation to reduce such disparities.

The Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act is a bill that will help reduce the disproportionate burden of mental health and mental health care disparities on African Americans and other people of color.

Mr. Speaker, the burden of mental illness on the health and productivity in the United States and throughout the world has long been underestimated. This is a situation that demands and needs immediate action, for all children and adults who live with mental illness. Enacting strong mental health parity legislation will improve the health status of individuals who suffer dire health consequences as a result of their mental illness and pushes us one step closer to achieving health equity.

I am pleased that the House passed H.R. 1424. Now we can move forward to eliminate all disparities in health care by passing H.R. 3014, the Healthcare Equity and Accountability Act.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JUAN ANTONIO "CHI-CHI" RODRIGUEZ IN PROFESSIONAL GOLF AND HIS WORK ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of my bill, a Resolution Recognizing the Accomplishments of Juan Antonio "Chi-Chi" Rodriguez in Professional Golf and His Work on Behalf of Children.

The bipartisan resolution I introduce today, congratulates and recognizes Juan Antonio "Chi-Chi" Rodriguez for his continued success on and off of the golf course, for his generosity and devotion to charity, and for his exemplary dedication to the intellectual and